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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 CU-02 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00
XMB-02 OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 ACDA-07
MC-02 STR-04 ERDA-05 NRC-05 /127 W
---------- 125534 /67
R 141219Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2058
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USMISSION BERLIN UNN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMCONSUL MUNICH
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USDEL MBFR VIENNA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USIA WASHDC

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TEL AVIV FOR AMBASSADOR

USIA FOR IOP, IBS, IPS, IEU

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, UR, US
SUBJ: ARBATOV ON U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY. ARBATOV'S ARTICLE IS A DETAILED AND AUTHORITATIVE
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RESTATEMENT OF THE SOVIET LINE OF RECENT WEEKS THAT U.S.-

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SOVIET DETENTE HAS SLIPPED BECAUSE OF THE U.S. ELECTIONS, BUT THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION SHOULD RESTART THE PROCESS, ESPECIALLY ON ARMS LIMITATION. THE ARTICLE REITERATES STRONG SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO MOVE AHEAD. END SUMMARY.

2. PRAVDA DEC 11 CARRIES A MAJOR ARTICLE BY GEORGIY ARBATOV, DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE USA AND CANADA, CALLED "SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS TODAY." THE ARTICLE (ASSUME DEPT HAS FULL TEXT) PULLS TOGETHER SEVERAL POINTS HEARD ELSEWHERE IN RECENT WEEKS INTO A DETAILED AND AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT OF WHERE WE HAVE BEEN, WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WE SHOULD GO. NOT SURPRISINGLY, THE WHOLE BLAME FOR THE "PAUSE" OF THE PAST YEAR RESTS ON THE U.S., BUT ARBATOV NEVERTHELESS REITERATES MOSCOW'S COMMITMENT TO BETTER RELATIONS, CITING THE RELEVANT PORTION OF BREZHNEV'S NOV 30 SPEECH TO THE SOVIET-U.S. TRADE AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL.

3. THE MAIN POINTS OF THE ARTICLE, IN OUR READING, ARE:

-- THE DESCRIPTION OF "THE IMPORTANCE AND COMPLEXITY" OF THE RELATIONSHIP;

-- THE TURN FOR THE BETTER IN RECENT YEARS;

-- THE LACK OF PROGRESS IN THE PAST YEAR;

-- THE FACT THAT PREVIOUS GAINS WERE NOT LOST;

-- THE SPECIFIC AREAS WHERE PROGRESS SHOULD HAVE BEEN MADE BUT WAS NOT: FLESHING OUT THE VLADIVOSTOK ACCORD OF 1974 AND MOVING TO A SALT II AGREEMENT; MBFR; REDUCTION OF MILITARY BUDGETS; THE GENEVA MEPC; THE REMOVAL OF DISCRIMINATORY TRADE RESTRICTIONS;

-- THE CULPRIT FOR THIS LACK OF PROGRESS, IN ARBATOV'S ARGUMENT, IS THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, AND SPECIFICALLY THE JINGOISTIC APPEALS FROM "ENEMIES OF DETENTE"
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BASED ON THE ALLEGED "SOVIET THREAT";

-- AMERICA'S PROBLEMS AT HOME AND ABROAD HAVE NOT BEEN CAUSED OR WORSENED BY DETENTE, ON THE CONTRARY;

-- THE FACT THAT NOT ALL PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN SOLVED SHOULD NOT CAUSE DISAPPOINTMENT AND SKEPTICISM, BUT RATHER SHOULD STRENGTHEN EFFORTS TO BROADEN DETENTE;

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-- STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS OF NEW ADMINISTRATION,
INCLUDING CARTER AND VANCE, HAVE A "POSITIVE CHARACTER"

-- IT'S UP TO THE U.S. TO CHANGE ITS APPROACH ON THE KEY QUESTIONS
OUTLINED ABOVE;

-- TIME IS RUNNING OUT AS GEORGE KENNER HAS WISELY SAID, AND
THE SOONER THE NEW ADMINISTRATION MOVES, THE BETTER;

-- THE SOVIET POSITION (CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTING BETTER
RELATIONS) IS CLEAR AND WAS RECENTLY RESTATED BY BREZHNEV.

4. COMMENT. ARBATOV'S EXPOSITION IS NEITHER NEW NOR NOVEL,
BUT IT IS IMPORTANT AS AN AUTHORITATIVE FOLLOW-UP TO
BREZHNEV'S SPEECH OF TWO WEEKS AGO. CLEARLY RELATIONS WITH
THE U.S. ARE HIGH ON MOSCOW'S CURRENT PRIORITY LIST,
AND THE SOVIETS APPARENTLY WANT TO LEAVE NO DOUBT THAT
THEY ARE EAGER TO GET RELATIONS MOVING AGAIN, ESPECIALLY
ON SALT AND OTHER ARMS CONTROL QUESTIONS.
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